

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From **Saturday**, February 20. to **Tuesday**, February 23. 1713.

IT cannot be wonder'd, that the Opposers of the Treaty of Commerce struggle hard to get rid of that Charge laid upon the Portugal Treaty, of its being an Invasion of Parliamentary Privilege, and a Breach of the Constitution.

But it must be confess'd, that the Method they take to shuffle off this Charge is very wonderful; and were not the Persons, who scribble for them, known to be such, as will not stick at the most dishonourable Methods to evade Guilt from themselves, as well as to cast it upon others, it would continue to be very strange, that Men could bring such weak empty Shifts, to clear themselves of a Charge of such Consequence, as this is.

The Sum of what they have to say for the Portugal Treaty is contain'd in this, that it is no Invasion of the Rights of Parliament, because a Parliament may undo it again, whenever they think fit.

This is such a juggle, that it suits with nothing, but a Sett of Writers abandoned to all manner of Frauds: None but Men, that can justify the old Scheme, could put such a weak unperforming piece of Sophistry upon the World.

God be praised, it is always in the Power of the People and Parliament of Great-Britain, especially with the Concurrence of a Sovereign, that is tender of their Privileges, to do themselves Justice, when they find their Rights Invaded either by Ignorant, or Knavish Measures of private or publick Men; and it is hoped, it will always be so in their Power. But what is this to the purpose? Are these Men the less Ignorant, or the less Knavish for that? Are those People, who made the Portugal Treaty the less to blame in giving up the Privilege of the People of England, and in making a Treaty destructive of Parliamentary Right, only because the Parliament were able to undo it again? What sort of Law or Logick do these People pretend to? What was the Foundation of the Revolution? Was it not the late King James Invading the Constitution and the Privilege of Parliament? And was it not in the Power of the Parliament to undo it all? Was it not always Potentially in them to do it, and at last Actually? And did they not exert that Power, and deliver themselves? Yet was not King James the less an Invader of Parliamentary Right for all that, nor was the Male Administration of that Reign the less Unjust and Injurious.

If the Ministers of State in those Days, had done as the present Ministers have done, (*viz.*) If they had laid the Article of the Portugal Treaty before the House of Commons to be made Effectual in Par-

liament, and the Treaty not to take place, till it had been so Consented to; This had been like Honest Men, to have recognized the Right of Parliament. But to make a Treaty, stipulating things, that Interferes with the undoubted Rights of the Parliament, and without laying them before the House to have them executed; depending upon it, that the Parliament had Power to undo it all again; Was neither just to the Parliament and People of England, or Honourable to the King of Portugal. And the *MERCATOR* cannot see how he could say less than he said before, (*viz.*)

1. *That the said Treaty is Void in its own Nature, as it is Inconsistent with the Constitution.* Vide Mag. Charta, cap. 37. And,

2. *That those, who made such a Treaty, ought to Answer for it.*

But we see the Liberties of England, and Privileges of Parliament shall be quibbled with, and staked upon every trifle, while this Game of Partics is a playing; and those, that in other Matters are loudest in behalf of Liberty, and would make themselves be thought Patriots of the Peoples Privileges, can set as light by them as any Body, when they are concern'd to venture them in the Cause they are carrying on.

But to bring the Case to a short Issue; Let those People, who made the Portugal Treaty defend it, as well as they can; these Men have, it seems, given it up thus far, (*viz.*) That the Parliament may undo it again when they please.

Very well! What then are we Debating about? This is what we are upon, and this is all the *MERCATOR* has said, (*viz.*) That the Parliament may make the Treaty of Commerce Effectual without any Injury to the King of Portugal: This they have now granted, for they have Printed, that the Parliament have a Right to Reverse the Portugal Treaty, and who indeed could doubt it.

IF THEN the Parliament are left at liberty to Reverse, what the Ministry did in that Treaty, then no wrong is done to Portugal, if the Treaty with France is made Effectual.

IF the Parliament are not left at Liberty, then is all true, that has been said of the Portugal Treaty, and it is of no force at all.

But the Opposers have surely forgotten, that they Argued some Months ago, that this Treaty with France being inconsistent with the Treaty with Portugal, and that



that Treaty with Portugal being thereby broken, the Breach of that Treaty was a Breach of the Peace with Portugal also; whereas now they are come down to the very thing the *MERCATOR* insisted on, *That the Conditions of breaking it were expressed in the very Treaty it self*, (viz.) That if England broke it, then should it be lawful for the King of Portugal again to Prohibit our Woollen Cloths. This they call'd a Forgery before, and now they are come to Argue it in their own behalf: Such a Talent of Modesty are the Opposers of this Treaty blest'd with, that what is Forgery in another, is just Reasoning, when they have Occasion for the same Argument.

The *MERCATOR* therefore still insists upon it, that this Treaty with Portugal was and is an Invasion of Parliamentary Right, limiting the Parliament, as far as such an Act can limit a Parliament in the great and fundamental Privilege of Laying Taxes and Taking off Taxes: which no Minister of State having Power to do, the same is of no Force at all, Magna Charta having expressly provided, that *any thing done contrary to the said Rights of the People of England, shall be of no force.* Mag. Char. cap. 37. sect. 6.

But still, as was said before, a Question might be very well asked of these Men: If they were as Tender of the Rights of the Parliament of Great Britain, as they would be thought, why, seeing the Treaty of Portugal did relate to laying on, and limiting the laying on of Duties, things which are the Peculiar of Parliaments, and which are so tender in their own Nature, that they ought not to be touch'd, but with the greatest Nicety in the World; why did they not leave a Salvo for the Privileges of the Parliament, and have that Article laid before the House to be made Effectual or not Effectual, as they thought fit?

Then they had acted like Patriots of Liberty, and had been justly valued for their Regard to Parliamentary Right; and either the Parliament had disallow'd that Treaty, as what tied them up too strictly from future Treaties with France, or having agreed to it, no Blame could have been laid on any one, nor any Treaty could since have been made to interfere with it.

But the Parson forgot, that he had been Clerk; they thought they might do what they pleased, though now they are the forwardest to attack the Actions of others.

And this Partiality is the Reason, why the *MERCATOR* says, what they are also displeased at, and would fain have not believed; (viz.) That they are not acting in Behalf of their Country, but in Behalf of a Party; which however is so apparent a Truth, that the *MERCATOR* cannot go from it. Whether that Party may be called a Faction or no, as the *MERCATOR* did not determine, so neither does he enter into the Dispute of it now; and therefore the Anger a certain Author has shewn at the *MERCATOR* on that account, is as unjust, as it is frivolous, for if they are not a Faction, well and good; the *MERCATOR* never call'd them such, tho' others affirm they have a just Claim to that Denomination: on the other hand, if they are, their Partiality, Scurriosity, Malignity at Persons, and falsifying of Facts, are but sorry ways to clear themselves of it. But this part of the Question may be enquired into by it self.

In the mean time, there is another Artifice of theirs, which merits to be spoken a little farther to; (viz.)

An Insinuation, that the Encrease of the Portugal Trade is owing to this Treaty; which is so contrary to Truth, that the *MERCATOR* thinks it is no way reasonable, that the People should be so grossly imposed upon; and if they will judge of the rest by the Injustice and foul Practices of these things, they need go no farther for a Proof of what the People are, that are putting these things upon them.

In the mean time, here is another Sketch of our daily Exportations to France, under all the present Discouragements of that Trade.

From the Custom-House.

Exported to France in Two Days, Feb. 11. 16.

850 Coney Skins
71 Barrels Salmon
17 Ton 7 C. Copperas
8 Ton Alom
5 Ton Red Lead
3 Ton 15 C. Litharige Lead
9 Ton 1 C. Iron Ordnance
1 Ton 15 C. Cheese
35 Firkins Butter
12 C. Cast Iron
22 Stuffs
* 12 Spanish Cloths
200 qr. Rye
16 C. Gauls
239 Furs
33800 Horn Plates
3000 Lanthorn Leaves
18 Bags Cotton Wooll: And
14404 l. Cotton Wooll
1 Ton 1 C. Ginger
3 Ton Almonds
7536 l. Pimento
246 l. Tea
75885 l. Virginia Tobacco

ERRATA in the Mercators.

- No. 113. Col. 3. lin. 23. for *that such* read *such*. Ib. l. 37. for *say no* r. *say so* no.
No. 114. Col. 3. l. 26. for *Britannice* r. *Britannica*. Ib. l. 49. for *been* r. *have been*.
No. 116. Col. 1. l. 26. for *impose us* r. *impose upon us*. Col. 2. l. 38. dele *us* to let. Col. 3. l. 36. for *Well! then* r. *will then*. Ib. l. 56. for *had the* r. *had not the*. Col. 4. l. 55. for 228 *Callicoes* r. 2208.
No. 117. Col. 2. l. 23. for *French* r. *Portugal*. Col. 3. l. 23. for *in that* r. *that in*.

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